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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: September Report and October Sermons

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Churches of Christ

salute you



SEPTEMBER REPORT AND
OCTOBER SERMONS -- 1955

HERALD OF TRUTH

I BELIEVE GOD--NO. 1

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 192

October 2, 1955

Friends, will you let me tell you a true story of a negro boy who lives in Baltimore, Maryland? He is now in Southwestern Christian College, Terrell, Texas, a school supported by members of churches of Christ. Of him their school paper has this to say; I quote it in part, "One day he heard a sermon on a program known as the Herald of Truth. He heard it through. He listened several times and became convinced he was hearing the truth. He set about to locate a minister of the church of Christ; did so and was baptized,—Wesley Brown was an honor graduate of one of the Baltimore High Schools.—His faith means much to him. There is little doubt that hundreds of people will hear and obey the truth as a result of his ability within the next few years. Brethren, it costs a lot of money to carry on such a program as the Herald of Truth! Have you not read somewhere, however, HOW MUCH ONE SOUL IS WORTH?" End of quotation.

This young man is but one of many thousands who have obeyed the gospel as a result of this program. He wrote the church at Highland and we put him in touch with the fine church at 530 University Parkway, Baltimore, Maryland, and he was baptized. If you have a better way to reach "every creature" with the gospel and that under the direction of the local congregation with her elders, than the way we are trying to do it by this radio program, then we beg of you to show us that way and let us get it into operation at once for we have some seventy-five million people in these United States who do not profess to be anything religiously. They are lost and well might we ponder the question, Who is to blame?

Not all the seventy-five million who profess to be Christians will be saved for many have not obeyed the gospel and are not living as God has commanded us to live. They too must be reached; they too must learn to "believe God." Wesley Brown "believed God."

OUR SUBJECT

With these things before us I now invite your attention to the subject for the day, "I Believe God." The setting for this is found in Acts 27:21-25, where Paul says, "Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I BELIEVE GOD, that it shall be EVEN AS IT WAS TOLD ME."

This young man from Baltimore had been made to "believe God"; these brethren who are helping us reach you with the gospel are doing it because we and they "believe God," that it shall be "even as it has been told us." Faith is the tragic need of this hour. Not faith in

man; in armies; in A-bombs; but faith in God. The world needs, not a dead faith, but a living, active, trusting, working faith in God.

TWO DIVISIONS

Faith can be divided into two great divisions: The faith that fails; and the faith that avails. You are ready to ask, Mr. Harper, is there such a thing as a faith that avails, and a faith that fails? Yes, read Galatians 5:6 and Luke 22:32. Just because it says a man believes, does not always mean he is saved or will be saved (John 12:42). In Matthew 8:26 Christ rebukes his disciples for having such "little faith."

FAITH THAT FAILS

In I Corinthians 15:14-17 we read of a "vain faith"; that is, one that is empty and without profit. In James 2:20 James said "faith without works is dead being alone." Certainly a "dead faith" cannot bring forth the blessings of God upon the world. It is the "faith that fails."

FAITH THAT AVAILS

On the other hand we read in Matthew 8:5-13 where the Lord said, "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel." In James 2:22 the writer speaks of a "faith made perfect by works." Last, Paul says in Galatians 5:6 the faith that "avails" is the "faith that works by love." This is the faith Paul wrote about in Romans 16:26 as he said, "but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the OBEDIENCE of FAITH." The "faith that OBEYS" is the "faith that avails"; the "faith that will NOT OBEY" is the "faith that fails." Which do YOU have? Do YOU "believe God"?

WHY MY FAITH IN GOD?

For one to be asked to believe in another there must be some indisputable facts given that warrant such faith and trust that will lead one to yield himself completely to another. The same is true with the Lord. There are certain unanswerable facts given in your Bible which causes me to place my faith in God's word; to make me announce to you today that, in the language of Paul, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

DANIEL

1. The first of these is found in Daniel, chapters two through eight. Here the prophet saw the rise and fall of four great world powers. They were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. Daniel calls the first three by name. In Daniel 2:38 he says to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, "Thou art THIS HEAD OF GOLD," establishing the fact that Babylon was the first of these great world powers to rule the world. In Daniel 8:21 we find the second kingdom was that of "Media and Persia" and the two horns he saw were the two kings of these nations, Darius and Cyrus (Daniel 5:31 and II Chronicles 36:23). The third was that of Greece or the Macedonian Kingdom, and the "great horn between her eyes" was Alexander the Great (Daniel 8:21).

ROME IS FOURTH

The next kingdom was the fourth. It is not named as were the other three. It was only described by its slaughter of the nations and its war against the saints of the Lord and its being the fourth. It was another "world-wide kingdom." There has never been but one other such earthly kingdom; that was Rome. She was the beast by whose sword the martyrs under the altar in Revelation 6 were slain. It was Rome who was said to have "shed the blood of the saints" and who, said John, would be given "blood to drink" (Revelation 16:6). It was this beast that John said carried the "woman" in Revelation 17:1-7 who is called the "mother of harlots," who also was said to be "drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." The true church is pictured by a "virgin," a "woman of purity" (II Corinthians 11:2). A "false church is pictured by a corrupt woman." Here a "woman, symbolic of a false religion," was being "carried by this beast." Both were guilty of the "blood of the saints" of Jesus Christ. Were you to doubt for one moment that this city was Rome, that was carrying this "harlot drunk with the blood of the saints," I read to you from Revelation 17:9 where it says, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." While this was symbolic of powers or kings to rule over this beast with this corrupt woman, who can doubt that the writer had in mind Rome when he referred to these "heads, these kings," being "seven mountains"? Rome was the only city in the world "built on seven hills," which city has ever "ruled the world."

There is one thing I am happy to say, that woman does not represent the church of which I am a member for at no time has the church of which I am a member ever depended upon the sword of Rome to slay our enemies that we might make the religion of the church of which I am a member the "state religion" forcing people to accept it or become "martyrs" to the cause they espoused. The church of which we are members has never been connected with the beast of Rome, that we might be in any sense referred to as being "drunk with the blood of the saints." The religion of the Lord is a religion that makes men free to act for themselves without any persecution from the church or from any power or government that is under her domination. All through Daniel and Revelation, Rome was pictured as the "beast that destroyeth the true followers of Christ" and Daniel saw her fall, her destruction. In Daniel 8:25 Daniel said of this fourth kingdom which was Rome, that "He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; BUT he shall be broken WITHOUT HAND." That this was Rome, carrying this false church, there can be no doubt, for Rome was the only kingdom ever to exist, following Alexander the Great, to rule the world.

But you may say, Brother Harper, all this could have been a forgery, written by someone who claimed to be Daniel, AFTER these nations met the fate of the prophet.

My friends, here is an UNDENIABLE PROPHECY that no man living can defeat. No infidel can answer it. No scoffer can set it aside. It must be answered; it must be refuted, or the credibility of the Bible stands as having been given by the inspiration of God; for man, unaided by divine help, could not have foreseen the manner in which this fourth nation, Rome, would fall. The book of Daniel was

written and in use long before Rome became this "world-wide power," much less before her down-fall. Every book of the Old Testament was in use before the death of Christ. The New Testament was given long before Rome fell. This prophecy could not have been a "forgery."

Daniel said this kingdom shall be "broken without hand." Just what is the meaning of this expression? Babylon "fell by the armies of her enemies," lead by Darius of the Medes. She "fell by the hands of man." The once mighty empire of the Medes and Persians, was overthrown by one of history's greatest generals, Alexander the Great, as he led the hordes of Greece across the world to make them fall before his conquering sword, and then "wept because there were no more worlds to conquer." Yes, the Medo-Persian kingdom fell by the "hand of man." After the death of Alexander the Great his kingdom was divided into four parts and from this division arose one who conquered all the rest and out of this arose this fourth kingdom, more fierce than those before. It had in it the "strength of iron" and subdued all these others. No other kingdom, other than Rome, has followed the fall of the Macedonian kingdom. Rome was that kingdom described in Daniel 7:7 as being "dreadful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." Which was the same beast that in verse 21 was said to have "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." It was this beast that John said in Revelation God gave it "blood to drink" because they had "shed the blood of the saints." This is the same "beast" that "carried the woman" in Revelation 17:1-10, which woman was said to be "drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus."

Now, Daniel, what was to happen to this "beast," which represents Rome? He said, "He shall be broken without hand." All these others were overthrown by the "hand of man," but not so with Rome. No man find the armies of men that marched against her in the 15th and 16th centuries to conquer her. She fell apart, as nation after nation deserted her: as religious reform after religious reform poured out its fury upon her for the persecutions of the past until the once proud head that had ruled the world was made to bow in shame, and meet the "judgment of God" that Daniel, in Daniel chapter 7 and verse 22, pronounced upon her. THIS fall of Rome took place over two thousand years after Daniel lived. It took place long after the Old and New Testaments were written. No man was living at the time of her fall who could have written this prophecy. In fact men read this prophecy long before Christ came to this earth.

Yes, Daniel foretold of the fall of Rome, told how it was to fall, or "be broken." It was "without hand," that is "without the armies of men." Unless divine help was given Daniel, how COULD he have known Rome would not be over-run by armies but would "be overthrown without hands"? This cannot be explained but in one way: God revealed it to him. Rome has dreamed of a future when she would once again enjoy this same power. She dreamed of this when Mussolini rose to power, but again she met the judgment of God and her king was found hanging with his head down. Never again do you need to fear Rome's ruling the world. God broke her power. Before he will permit that to happen again, he will "rain fire down from

heaven and devour her" and the "woman that rode upon her" (Revelation 20:9-10).

"Believe God"? Why should I not "believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." This prophecy was literally fulfilled. Rome actually fell; Rome was literally "broken" "without hands." She was "broken;" not "conquered." But the one thing we need to know about her being "broken" instead of "conquered" is this: "what was to break her." In Daniel 2:34 he said, "Thou sawest till a STONE was cut out without hands, which SMOTE the IMAGE upon his feet that were of IRON, and CLAY, and BRAKE them to pieces." In verse 35 it says "and the STONE that SMOTE the IMAGE became a GREAT MOUNTAIN, and FILLED the whole earth." Mountain represents governments. Hence this "stone" was a "kingdom" that would arise and through its influence would break in pieces this fourth kingdom. What was that kingdom? Was it an earthly kingdom, with an earthly king, and an earthly army fighting with guns and swords? Daniel in this same chapter, verse 44, tells us what that kingdom is: He said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but IT shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever." That kingdom, ladies and gentlemen, is a "spiritual kingdom," it is the Kingdom of Christ, as he sits now upon David's throne, to rule until the end of the world when he shall "deliver the kingdom up to God, even the Father" (I Corinthians 15:24). I am happy to be a citizen of that kingdom that brought this "beast" to his knees through the teachings of Christ, causing men and nations to forsake this "beast," and to turn on him in their anger to wreak vengeance upon him for his sins of the past. Being, therefore, a citizen of this kingdom, why should I not "believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me"? He who by the simple teaching of righteousness, and without a sword, could bring to his knees such a beast as seen by Daniel and John, certainly is one in whom I can place my trust and my confidence firm unto the end.

WHAT GOD HAS SAID

Turn with me now and hear the words of our Father as he speaks to us through his Son, as Paul said in Hebrews 1:1-2. In Matthew 28:18-19 this Son said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Why did Christ want all nations to be baptized? There must have been a reason. Let us hear God's Son give us that reason as he says in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and IS baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned." In the words of the apostle Paul, may I say, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." What was told us? "He that believeth and IS baptized shall be saved." Again that Son said to his disciples before he went away that he would send them another Comforter to guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13). Christ, this Son, commanded them to "tarry in Jerusalem" for the coming of the Spirit (Luke 24:49). They went to the city; the Spirit came (Acts chapters one and two). When these men

of God began to tell them of Jesus, whom they had crucified by the Roman soldiers, telling them that God had made him "both Lord and Christ" they, being pricked in their hearts, that is convicted of their sins, asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter, guided by the Spirit, told them to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." The Bible declares that "they that gladly RECEIVED their word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Verse 47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily, such as should be saved." Verse 44 calls only those who were baptized, the "believers."

Yes, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Churches of Christ in your area believe and teach this same thing. We have done what these did. "Believing God that it shall be even as it was told me," we have believed and obeyed his teachings. Therefore, having done the same things they did, we are "saved," are "added by the Lord to his church;" have "remission of our sins" and are among the number called "believers in God." If not, I ask you, why not? If all the world were to "believe God" as did Paul and these on Pentecost (Acts 2), why should it not make us all what it made them? They were members of the same church. They were not divided into warring sects, teaching different doctrines by which the world was to become confused.

My friends, I close begging you and yours to come believing in God as these did; repent of your sins as did these in Acts 2; be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of your sins as did they, and God being "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), you will be what they were and they were "what the Lord wanted" for he "added them" to "his church." This church was the stone, the kingdom, that was to break this image (Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45). Pentecost was the time the stone was cut out of the mountain. It will triumph over this beast again at the second coming of our Lord (II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 20:9-10). Won't you become a part of this victorious church by obeying the gospel? Will you not "believe God that it will be even as it was told me?" May God bless you and keep you is my prayer in our Master's name.

I BELIEVE GOD--NO. 2

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 193

October 9, 1955

My good people, have you ever just sat down and seriously considered death? Have you ever tried to think of the meaning of eternity? Has it ever dawned upon you the fact that eternity never ends, it just goes on and on and on and when you have been there ten thousand years, as we measure time, it will be no nearer the end than it was when first death kissed your eyes to sleep and you suddenly slipped away into the over there. John, in Revelation 22:5 and Revelation 20:10, shows that both the saved and the wicked shall live forever.

From this we see that both the good and the bad shall live throughout all eternity. Neither shall be destroyed. When you think that this

living shall never end, it becomes a serious, sobering matter. Foolish is the man who will waste his years here and make no preparation for that never ending eternity into which he will one day be hurled!

I BELIEVE GOD

I am asking you again today in the language of Paul (Acts 27:25) to "Believe God that it will be even as it was told me." I am begging you to place your faith, your trust, and your hopes in him who has created the heavens and the earth and who is even now "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3).

REASONS FOR BELIEVING GOD

As in a former lesson, I am today giving you a number of reasons why I am willing to place my faith in God, believe his word, and rely upon his precious promises. First, there is no other to whom I can go for an intelligent answer to the question: From whence did I come? What is my mission here? And what is my destination (John 6:68)? With faith in God and in the Bible, all the above questions are solved with an intelligence that makes the learned of this earth bow their heads in shame. Without God they have no sensible answer to the above questions and too, only one generation has to pass for their theories to become obsolete. Not so with the God whom I worship and serve! His answers, like the fountains of waters, are ever fresh with a living hope and are able to give life and inspiration to each new generation.

ROME FALLS

In a former lesson I gave as one reason why you may "believe God," the literal fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy (chapter 2:7 and 8) as he foretold of the destruction of the fourth kingdom which was Rome. She actually fell in the manner described by Daniel nearly two thousand years before. It could not have been a "forgery."

BABYLON FALLS

Here I give you another reason why you may "believe God that it shall be done even as it was told me." In Isaiah 13, the prophet speaking of Babylon, made this solemn threat concerning her. I bid you listen to it and then know that what God has said about us will as surely come to pass as did this. In verse 17 he begins by saying, "Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it." Then he says, "And BABYLON, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall NEVER be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." In Jeremiah 25:12 the prophet says of Babylon, "And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished,

that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord FOR THEIR INIQUITY, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it PERPETUAL DESOLATIONS. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations." In chapter 50, verse 2 and 9 through 11, Jeremiah says, "Declare ye among the nations, publish and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Mero-dach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces—I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country; and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, said the Lord. BECAUSE ye were glad, BECAUSE ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of MINE HERITAGE, BECAUSE ye are GROWN FAT as the heifer at grass and bellow as bulls."

Ladies and gentlemen, I need not go into a long tiresome discussion of the fall of Babylon. All know that centuries ago she ceased to exist and this prophecy of God, through his servants, literally came to pass. God said: I will make it a "perpetual desolation" and such is her history unto this day. How could mortal man have known just what nation, that of the Medes under Darius would overthrow her? (Daniel 5:31; Isaiah 13:17). How could uninspired man have foretold the complete destruction of this great city seven hundred years before it came to pass? Only one answer, the God in whom Paul believed, gave the answer. He said, "I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it," and that he did.

Why do I "believe God?" Why should I not believe him? Why should I not place my trust and faith in his promises? Not one has ever failed to come to pass!

SEES THE CHRIST

The Christ himself stands as an unanswerable testimony to the truth that I can "believe God." In Isaiah 9:6-7 the prophet says, "for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." In Isaiah 11:10 the prophet declares that he who should stand up as an "ensign of the people" shall be of the "root of Jesse" and "to it shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious."

That this was literally fulfilled in the Christ I have but to read from Luke 1:26-35 where it says concerning the Christ, "He shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto HIM the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Paul, writing to the church in Rome says of this Christ (Romans 15, verse 12), "And again Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in HIM shall the Gentiles trust." Talk to

FULFILLMENT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

me about rejecting the Bible; ask me to trust in the traditions of men and churches! How could such predictions be so accurately foretold, centuries before they were to come to pass except it be from God? Like Paul of old, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

PLACE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

The birthplace of Christ stands to defy the skeptic and support my "faith in God." In Micah 5:2 is foretold the place of his birth, the very city itself. The prophet said, "But thou, BETHLEHEM EPHRATAH, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." I have but to turn to Matthew, chapter 2 and verses 4-6 to find the fulfillment of this very prophecy as the Wise Men come to find the child born to Mary. The king had gathered the chief priests and scribes together and "demanded of them where Christ should be born." Hear the answer, "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." This was the exact prophecy found in Micah 5:2, being here ascribed to the birth of Christ.

But in Luke 2, verses 6-7 is recorded the actual birth of Christ, Joseph and Mary have now entered the city of Bethlehem and "while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Here, in the city of David, which is Bethlehem, came to pass the promise made by Micah seven hundred years before. Again it was literally fulfilled in the very city where the prophet declared it should take place.

"Believe God?" Why should I not believe one who sees the future and possesses the power to see that his ways are not defeated? Why turn away from a God who is able to do what my God has done and go down into the grave to face all eternity with the sickening theories of the infidels of our land. They have nothing to offer you. Our God has everything and these demonstrations of his power in the destruction of Rome; the overthrow of Babylon; and the perfect fulfillment of these prophecies are enough to inspire in my heart confidence in the God of the Bible. Let some infidel bring forth a better hope; let the infidel give me one reason for believing him, and NOT "believing God" who is able to make his words come true!

FORETELLS HIS MOTHER

One of the most beautiful of all prophecies and, another reason why I "believe God" is, that which foretells of the "mother" of our Lord. In Isaiah 7:10-16 God says to Ahaz, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a VIRGIN shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

I know the modernist and some translators have tried to weaken the force of the virgin birth of the Son of God, trying to make this mean

just "a young woman," but not so. That this means a "virgin," we are assured by the words of the Angel himself as he quotes this very prophecy, the record of which is found in Matthew 1:18-23. Here the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, THAT it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a VIRGIN shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name EMMANUEL which being interpreted is, God with us." To deny this is to make the angel of God the master deceiver of the universe, and is to discredit the Word of God as a perpetrated fraud for the purpose of deception. I believe this prophecy to be just as true as the others in which we found their literal fulfillment in the destruction of these great world powers.

In Luke 1, verses 26-34, Luke speaks of "Mary" as the "mother of Jesus" as he says Gabriel came "To a VIRGIN espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." He said to Mary, "Fear not, Mary for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name JESUS." That Mary was a VIRGIN there can be no doubt IF we "Believe God that it shall be even as it was told me," for the Bible says she was a "virgin"; her name was "Mary"; and that she "knew not a man." Yes, the "virgin birth of Christ"; the "place of his birth"; and his "mother" were all foretold in the Bible seven hundred years before they transpired. How could this be except for but one reason, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). Can you give a better answer?

DEATH OF CHRIST FORETOLD

Just as the birth of Christ was accurately foretold, so was his death. In Isaiah, chapter 53 is a most beautiful description of the Christ, his trials, and his death. It is another reason for my "believing God."

Isaiah said of Christ that he "grew up before us as a tender plant"; he was "despised and rejected of men"; he "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows"; he was "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted"; he was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities"; the Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all"; and in his oppression "he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so HE opened not HIS mouth. He was taken from prison and judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken"; he "made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death"; his "soul was made an offering for sin"; God's "righteous servant was to justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities"; "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath POURED OUT HIS SOUL UNTO DEATH: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he BARE the SINS OF MANY and made INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSOR."

You are ready to ask, Do you now "Believe God that it shall be

even as it was told me"? I certainly do and every prediction found here came to pass. Time does not permit or each of these could be found in our New Testament just as were these others. However, I give you one reference found in Acts 8:30-35 where Philip joined himself to the chariot and found the Eunuch reading this 53rd chapter of Isaiah and he asked the Eunuch, "Understandest thou what thou readest? and he said, How can I except some man guide me? Now the place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth? The eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speakest the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Friends, hear the divine record as it says, "Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and PREACHED unto him JESUS." There can be no doubt of Isaiah 53 referring to Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let the infidel explain this away with any semblance of intelligence. If any group of honorable witnesses were to testify concerning some outstanding event and their testimonies were to be so accurately and harmoniously expressed as these, so meticulously accurate in every description, what would any honest, intelligent judge be forced to do with such testimony? Would he laugh such honorable testimony to scorn?

Never have any college professors, doctors of philosophy, or great and learned students of the Bible been able to equal, much less surpass, the writings of your Bible with respect to our manner of living, or our obligations to a sin cursed world. Let them surpass the teachings of our Master in the science of right living before they undertake surpassed the Sermon on the Mount? What scornful atheist has ever been able to put to shame the 23rd Psalm?

Were I an infidel or a scorner of the Bible; or were I a religious leader who taught my people that the Bible was not complete to guide my people to heaven, I certainly would present something to them that would be able to surpass its beauty and put to shame its precious promises. Good people, you need to learn that the God who gave you the Bible is a God in whom you may trust and his word is your final guide. You need to learn that when your Bible speaks THAT IS GOD SPEAKING TO YOU. Yes, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Throw away everything, every creed book written by man that binds you to its mandates and join hands with us of the churches of Christ across the world in respecting the Bible and it alone as God's revelation to man.

COME TO THIS CHRIST OF PROPHECY

As I close today I beg of you to come to this Christ of Isaiah 53, revealed to us in our New Testament as our only Saviour; the only one who can cleanse us from our iniquities. Now as Philip spoke to the eunuch, preaching "Christ unto him," they came to a "certain water" and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Now Philip "commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went

down, both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he (Philip) baptized him (the eunuch)." Now the Spirit of the Lord "caught away Philip" and the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." Honestly, was your conversion like this? The eunuch "believed God" and was "baptized."

Friends, this Christ of Isaiah 53 said "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." It has been told us that if we will "believe and be baptized we shall be saved." Do you believe it? This Christ has commanded that we "repent or perish" (Luke 13:3). Do you believe God? I do, hence I have repented. This same Christ has commanded us to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world" (Titus 2:11-13). Do you believe him? If so you will obey him.

THE UNBELIEVER

He who refuses to obey his Lord is an unbeliever (Hebrews 3:9-19). I beg of you today to "believe God" as did these prophets, as did Paul, and won't you do as did this eunuch to whom Christ was preached; won't you "believe and be baptized that you may be saved?" Churches of Christ believe and teach this. Won't you visit us where you live or write us and let us help you? May God bless you and keep you is my prayer in the holy name of Christ Jesus our Lord.

I BELIEVE GOD-NO. 3

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 194

October 16, 1955

Two men were riding by a cemetery one night when one said to the other, "John, do you know it won't be long until we shall be sleeping out there?" John replied, "How well do I know it!" The first man asked, "John, have you made any preparations for that day when it comes?" John, misunderstanding what he meant, said, "Yes, I have everything in order. I have my family lot; a burial policy; my wife's preacher selected for the service, and an insurance policy to take care of my family when I am gone. Everything is in order."

The first man said, "John, that is not what I meant. I meant are you prepared to die when that hour comes? Have you believed God? Have you obeyed your Master?" John was silent for a long time and finally said, "You know that is strange! I had overlooked the most important part in my preparation for death—my soul."

My good friends, have you made ready for the burial of your body, forgetting it is your soul that needs the preparation for death!

In a former lesson I gave a number of reasons for my faith in God's word. First, the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the literal fall of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:7-8). Second the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah regarding the destruction of Babylon. (Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 25:12). Third, I pointed out the literal fulfillment of the prophecies relative to the "Birth of Christ" (Isaiah 9:6; 11:10);

his "Virgin Birth" (Isaiah 7:14). Also the "Place" of his birth (Micah 5:2).

THE JEWISH NATION

Today, if I may, I should like to suggest that the great Jewish people stand as an unanswerable argument to the infidels and skeptics. Their history is too well known to be disputed. The characters among them in our Old Testament were real. Moses, Solomon, David, were all men as we are today. No man has ever been able to disprove the accuracy of their historical accounts surrounding the Jewish nation. The Law of Moses stands as a document able to defy the most learned accuracy of their historical accounts surrounding the Jewish nation. of our schools today. The Law of Moses was actually given back in the long ago when men were not schooled as they are today, yet it shames all men who, unaided by divine help, undertake to surpass its dignity and beauty. Their exile in Egypt and their deliverance is a fact that no scholarly man dare deny. The record of it is found in Exodus, chapters 3 through 15. Everything connected with this story of a physical nature is accurate to perfection. For instance, Egypt still lives; the Red Sea is still there; the Wilderness through which they passed, you may wander through it unto this day. The Jordan River is beyond question; Canaan existed then as it does now, and beyond all historical doubt Pharaoh reigned at that time as king in Egypt. Mt. Sinai, upon which was given the Law of Moses, can be seen by man today. You can stand where Moses stood as God delivered the Law unto him.

Now friends, why should I doubt for one moment the truth connected with this great nation of people when I can prove every physical statement made by them to be beyond question? Yes, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).

THE SIMPLE THINGS

The next thing to which I call you attention as I ask you to believe God, is this fact: The SIMPLE things related to us in the Bible are all meticulously accurate. When men write as did the men of your Bible and the incidental things, the LITTLE THINGS, are all true, which things could not have been planned for the purpose of deception it is then you may put your faith in the HONESTY of such writers.

DOWN TO GAZA

One of these "simple things" is found in Acts 8:26, where it says, "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth DOWN FROM JERUSALEM unto Gaza, which is desert." This becomes one of the strongest kind of arguments upon which to build your faith in the Bible. Here it says they went "down" from Jerusalem. Do you know it is ACTUALLY, LITERALLY, DOWN from Jerusalem? Do you know that the road he was instructed to travel was a road that led to the "Gaza that was desert?" It was not the country that was a "desert," without water, as many would have you think as they discuss the baptism of the eunuch in water (Acts 8:36-39). There were two Gazas, one was "Old Gaza," the other was "New Gaza." Now Old Gaza was "desert," that is

deserted, and it was the road that lead them to old DESERTED GAZA that he was to take.

In this narrative, Jerusalem and Ethiopia were and are actual places; the roads were there; the meeting place was just as described here. Why then, since everything physical is the truth, should I deny the events in the narrative? Yes, I "believe God" that Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch, and the eunuch "believed and was baptized" and went on his way rejoicing, just as "it was told me" in Acts 8.

STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

In Acts 9, verses 10-11, we have a very similar event. Saul of Tarsus had been persecuting Christians; the Lord had just met him on his way to Damascus; the Lord had told him to "go to the city and there it would be told him what he must do" (verse 6). Now the Lord comes to Ananias and tells him, (verse 11), "Arise and go into the STREET called STRAIGHT, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, behold he prayeth." I would have you notice with what accuracy this is told. There was and is a city called Tarsus; a city called Damascus; in that city there was and is a street called "Straight." Now WHY should I deny the events of this story, when I know they told the truth regarding every other statement in it? Yes again, "I believe God" that Saul of Tarsus was in the house of Judas, on the "street" called "straight" and that the Lord appeared to Ananias, sent him to Saul that he might tell Saul "what he must do" (Acts 9:6). I believe Ananias said to Saul, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Do you? I believe this was what he "must do," and I believe he did it that his "sins might be washed away" (Acts 22:16), as the Bible says. Yes, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Do you? Have you done what Saul did? He did what the Lord wanted him to do, he "believed and was baptized" and the Lord, who sent Ananias, said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Go with me now to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26). It is here that Christ went with his disciples on the night of his betrayal. It is here he took with him Peter, James and John and asked them to watch with him. They fell asleep. The great heart of our Lord looked upon them with pity and mercy for he knew they were tired, and finally, having prayed to his Father three times, saying "thy will be done, not mine," he said to Peter, James and John, "sleep on now and take your rest for the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Judas now betrays his Master with a kiss; the mob takes him that night before the high priest. When morning comes they bring him before Pontius Pilate. They cry out to Pilate, "Give us Barabbas but crucify the Christ." When Pilate could not prevail upon the crowd to release Jesus, whom he knew to be an innocent man, he "washed his hands" and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, SEE YE TO IT." But Pilate isn't through with Jesus. Pilate will one day stand before Christ again; this time Christ will be the judge and Pilate will beg for mercy.

They crucify our Lord. His body is taken down and buried in Joseph's new tomb (verse 60). The Roman seal is placed upon the grave. Soldiers stand guard (v. 66). But man could not defeat the plan of God. The Roman seal was broken; the stone rolled away; Christ arose, bringing to us hope beyond this vale of tears; hope of living again.

He meets his disciples in Galilee and gives to them the Great Commission, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things **WHATSOEVER** I have commanded you and lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20).

After forty days upon the earth, he takes his disciples out as far as "Bethany" into the "Mount of Olives" (Luke 24:50), which is but a "Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12), and it was from this memorable spot that our Lord ascended back into the heavens, back to his Father from whence he had come.

ALL DENIED

These great truths are denied by the infidels of the world and they laugh me to scorn for believing this entire story. You ask me, Do you really believe this? Yes, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." Let me point out to you the things in this narrative that cannot be denied. (1) First there was and is the beautiful "Garden of Gethsemane" with its large and stately trees being kissed by the gentle breeze as they were nearly two thousand years ago while Christ knelt beneath their humbled boughs and prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." Those same trees under which he prayed are standing there today. (2) Pilate was actually governor at this time. (3) Rome actually had soldiers in that province. (4) There was and still is the place of "calvary." It can be seen by you today if you are there. (5) The Roman government placed its seal upon that which she did not wish to be molested. (6) There was then and still exists, the Mount of Olives, just east of Jerusalem beyond the Kidron Ravine. (7) Bethany, her existence is beyond question. The strange thing here is, that Bethany, as the Bible states, was actually in Mount Olivet and was just a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem.

Now my good people, those of you who may have been prone to doubt your Bible, rid your minds of all such doubt. Why doubt the spiritual things related in these narratives when every physical description is to the Nth degree correct? If you were a judge and every known fact concerning a group of witnesses, such as these we have today, were to be proven absolutely correct and not one point could you find to be wrong, honestly, just what would you do with their testimony? Would you throw it out, especially when those accusing them could not disprove one item of their testimony and all the argument they had against them was: "I just do not believe it!"

TRUSTWORTHY

I believe, in these lessons, if you will write for them all and study them, together with your Bibles and history, you will see that I have

established ample evidence upon which you may put your faith in the Bible as God's word and that you, like Paul, will be able to say, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

MEN IN OLD TESTAMENT WHO BELIEVED GOD

In your Old Testament there were a number of men called "believers in God," record of which is given in our New Testament in Hebrews 11. It will be observed not ONE of these examples in the Old Testament is by "faith only." Each one whose name appears in this great picture hall of God's immortal dead, is a man whose faith "obeyed God." There are no examples of God's saving man by "faith only." James tells us that justification "is not by faith only" (James 2:24). Hence the doctrine of "faith only" is condemned, expressly so, by James.

1. In verse 4 of Hebrews 11 it says "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gift: and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh." What is the message he speaks to us? Simply this, when God speaks, we must hear and obey. Abel "offered," he did something; he therefore "obtained witness" that he was "righteous"; and now his "obedient faith speaks."

2. In verse 5 it says "Enoch was translated that he should not see death." In Genesis 5:22 it tells us why God took him. It says, "Enoch walked with God." How long? "300 years." He "believed God"; he walked with him. This is what it means to "believe in God." It was not "faith alone."

3. In verse 7 we are told "by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, MOVED with fear, PREPARED an ark to the saving of his house: by which he condemned the world, and became HEIR of the righteousness which is by faith." Was this "by faith alone?" No! Noah "obeyed God"; he "moved to build the ark"; he stands as an example of what it means to "believe God." It is the obedient faith like that of Noah that makes us "heirs of God." Never "faith only."

4. One more before we leave this record of men in the Old Testament who "believed God." In verse 8 we read, "By faith, Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, OBEYED: and WENT OUT, not knowing whither he went." Here is another living demonstration of what it means to "believe God." When he knew not where he was going, his "faith in God's word" moved him to "obey God." Because he "obeyed God," Paul in Romans 4:11 calls him the "father of them that believe." Again we see that the "faith that saves" is the "faith that OBEYS GOD." This was not by "faith only." In each of these who are called "believers in God" back in the Old Testament their faith "obeyed God." It was not until their faith had completed its OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD'S COMMANDS that they of the Old Testament received God's blessings. Do YOU "believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" as did these? If you have not obeyed his word you are not the kind of "believer in God" they were.

EXAMPLES IN NEW TESTAMENT

As I come to the close of this series on "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me," I bring to you some examples of those who are called "saved believers in God" from your New Testament, that Testament under which we live today.

In Acts, chapter two, Peter reminds them of their crucifixion of the Son of God; the glorious resurrection of Christ to rule on David's throne (verses 29-35) and that God had made this Jesus whom they had crucified "both Lord and Christ" (verse 36). Having heard this, they ask what to do. Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (verse 38). Three thousand OBEYED Peter's instructions and were baptized (verse 41). In verse 47 they were "added to the church by the Lord" and called the "saved." Now in verse 44 it says "and ALL THAT BELIEVED were together." ONLY those who OBEYED HIM were called "believers." But all who OBEYED HIM were "baptized FOR the remission of sins." We must conclude therefore that only those who are "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" are called "saved believers." There is NO exception to this rule. In Romans 5, they were called "believers" BUT they had already been "buried with Christ by baptism" (Romans 6:3-4) when Paul called them believers. In I Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul told the Corinthians they were believers, BUT this was AFTER they had been baptized (Acts 18:8). Never BEFORE. The Galatians, in Galatians 3:26 were called "children of God by faith" but it was AFTER they had been "baptized into Christ" (verse 27). Not before! The Ephesians were said to have been "saved by grace through faith" (chapter 2:8-9). BUT AGAIN this was said about them long AFTER they had been baptized in Acts 19:1-10. It was never before baptism!

On and on we could go but in no example is it ever by "faith alone." Always they are called "believers" in the New Testament only after baptism. Yes, in the language of Paul, "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." In every conversion after the New Testament became effective (Acts 2), it began by "preaching the gospel, continued by their believing in God and being baptized." Not one exception!

CONCLUSION

I come now begging YOU to "believe God" as did Paul, and as did all these we have found in our New Testament. They were called "believers in God" after they were "baptized." Never before! If you will "obey God" today you will be a "Christian," a "saved believer," and the Lord will add you to his church as he did these (Acts 2:47). Yes, I "believe God that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25). Christ told us "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). I believe him, do you? Peter said, "Repent and be baptized for remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). I believe him. Do you? Paul said those "who obey not the gospel shall be lost" (II Thessalonians 1:8-9). I believe him. Paul says in Hebrews 5:8-9 that Christ is the "author of eternal salvation to all them that OBEY HIM." I believe him. Do you?

My friends, will you not come today "believing God," "repenting of

your sins," and be "baptized for the remission of your sins," as did they, confessing your faith in Christ as the Son of God and accepting your Bible, as God's only revelation to man? Yes, Churches of Christ "believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." May God bless you and keep you is my prayer in the holy name of Jesus our Lord.

GOD'S UNALTERABLE PATTERNS

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 195

October 23, 1955

My good friends, as the regular preacher for the Highland Church of Christ, let me say on their behalf that we are exceedingly thankful to you for listening to our program and for the many letters you write us. Many thousands of people have been brought to obey our Lord, and by such obedience, have been "added to the church" by Christ himself (Acts 2:47). Many more have been caused to return to their "first love" (Revelation 2:4-5), and the plain, simple preaching of the gospel of Christ has inspired many Christians and congregations to greater work in the kingdom of our Master. If you are hearing this broadcast for the first time, will you do as others, hear it through? It is different and you will find we adhere strictly to the word of God as our guide and NOT to creeds, disciplines, traditions, councils of men, or conventions to form our policies. The Bible is our "only" guide. The Lord said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In John 17:17 he says, "Thy WORD is truth" and Peter in I Peter 1:25 says, "And this IS the WORD which by the GOSPEL is preached unto you."

GOD'S UNALTERABLE PATTERNS

With the truth, the gospel, God's word, as our only guide I would like to discuss with you the subject, "God's Unalterable Patterns." In Hebrews 8:5 will be found the setting for our lesson. Paul said, regarding Moses and his erection of the tabernacle, "See, saith he, (God), that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40). From this we are able to see what God calls a "binding pattern." When he lays down certain specifications and then says "See that you build it according to this pattern," that is the end of the matter. It must not be altered or changed at any point by man. When God gives a "binding pattern" man should have no trouble knowing what it is.

EXAMPLES

I invite you to study with me now four "unalterable patterns" given to us by the Lord. The first is that of the Ark, found in Genesis 6:14-16. Here God lays down an "unalterable pattern" or blueprint. He said to Noah, "Make thee an ark." Had he stopped there, Noah could have done as he pleased, but God did not stop there. He gave him the exact specifications for this ark. (1) First, it was to be made of "gopher wood." Nothing else. (2) It had to have "rooms" in it. (3) You shall

"pitch it within and without with pitch." (4) It shall be 300 cubits, or 450 feet long; 50 cubits, or 75 feet wide; and 30 cubits, or 45 feet high. (5) "A window shalt thou make to the ark and in a cubit, 18 inches, shalt thou finish it above." (6) The "door of the ark shall thou set in the side." (7) "With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it." God said, "Make thee an ark": Here is the "pattern." This is a "bound pattern" (Genesis 6:14). Noah dare not change or alter one specification given him. Had he changed it in one particular, it would have ceased to be the "pattern given to him by the Lord" and would have become his "own pattern," a "mutilated pattern." He did not give him the "permissible privilege" of building some three or four different kinds of arks, and then taking the one best suited for that occasion, nor did he permit him to take some three or four parts from each of the arks and make him a "pattern for all time" and "all generations" to follow. Had Noah built three or four arks, all differing the one from the other, he could not have stood off and said, "Look, THIS is the PATTERN." That would have been confusion. God gave the "pattern" for one ark, and that "pattern" was bound. IT COULD NOT BE CHANGED IN ONE particular. My good people, we MUST learn that God's "patterns" cannot be altered. They are "unalterable."

TABERNACLE

Our second "pattern" we shall study is that of the "tabernacle" about which we read in the beginning from Hebrews 8:5. In Exodus 25:9 God says, "According to all that I shew thee, after the PATTERN of the tabernacle, and the PATTERN of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." In verse 40 he said, "Which was shewed thee in the MOUNT." Here is a "BINDING PATTERN." Not one thing in it can be changed without God's wrath being visited upon the one who does it.

DIMENSIONS

In the construction of this tabernacle there was an "outer court" (Exodus 27:18). It was 100 cubits, or 150 feet long; 50 cubits, or 75 feet wide; and 5 cubits, or 7½ feet high. These dimensions could not be "altered" by Moses. Just inside this outer court there was the "altar of sacrifice," then the "laver" or "basin of water" at which the priests washed. Now Moses could not change one item of this without disobeying God. It was, by Moses, "UNALTERABLE." Then we have the tabernacle proper within the outer court. God gave the "blueprints" on this. It was 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, 15 feet high. It was to be divided into two sections, the first, the Holy Place; the second, the Most Holy Place. In the Holy Place we find the "shew bread," the "candlesticks," and just in front of and before you entered the Most Holy Place was the "altar of incense." Dividing the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was a curtain. Inside the Most Holy Place was the Ark of the Covenant. Many other things were given in this "pattern," but time forbids our giving them all.

The lesson I want you to get from this "pattern" of God is this: You can't change God's "patterns." You are not at liberty to change them to suit your own ideas, nor can you alter them to fit the varying situations that may arise. God's "patterns" are "unchangeable" until

he gives the orders to change. God did not give Moses some three or four ways of building the "outer court" and then when they were all finished, say to Moses, as he gazed upon them all, "This is the pattern!" It would have been confusing to Moses, for there would have stood four different kinds of "outer courts," all differing in "pattern"; no two "patterns" alike. God would have been forced to tell him which of the four God had chosen as the "pattern," or the Lord would have had to take parts from each and then give to Moses a new "pattern." We must learn, when God lays down the "blueprint" and commands that we "build it according to the pattern," that this is a "bound pattern" and no man dare alter it. It is "unalterable."

When he gave the dimensions and the fixtures of the "tabernacle proper," that was it. Moses could not leave out the "shew bread table," which beautifully pictures to us the "bread of life"; he could not alter the "candlesticks," which are symbolic of our light we get from the Bible, and make fewer or more lights. God had told him how many. He dare not move the "altar of incense," which represents to us the prayers of the saints. Why? These are "God's unalterable patterns." We need to learn when a thing becomes an "unalterable pattern of God." Once that is learned, much of our confusion in the religious world is over. When God issues a command, you can't change it, nor can you violate it. His commands are sacred. These "patterns," given in detailed form, commanded of the Lord to build as he directs, become "binding patterns." Once you establish a thing as a "pattern commanded of God," that ends all debate. Man has but one obligation, that is "do it" or be punished.

Now God did not say, build some sort of tabernacle. Had he done that, man could have built it any way, just so he built a tabernacle. God did not show him a half dozen methods or ways of erecting tabernacles and then point to them all and say, "Moses, there is the pattern." Had he placed before Moses many methods of doing this thing, the best God could have then done would have been to say to Moses, "Here are 'the patterns,' take the one best suited for this occasion." Then they would cease to become a "binding pattern," but would have become "expedients" by which Moses might best meet the needs of the hour. Moses would have had a choice, but not so in God's "binding patterns." In them man has no choice. God's "binding patterns" are not flexible, changeable, but are "unalterable."

Many of you, brethren, listening to me know what I mean when I say God did not give Noah a half dozen methods of building an ark and then say to him, "THIS IS THE PATTERN, Noah!" Neither did he give Moses many methods or ways of erecting the tabernacle and then stand off and shout to him, "THIS IS THE PATTERN, Moses!" When God lays down a "binding pattern" for all generations in a certain dispensation, he does not confuse them by placing before them a dozen methods or ways and then say to them, "THIS IS THE PATTERN." He is specific and direct as in the Ark and the Tabernacle.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

There is another "pattern" I wish to discuss with you who are kind enough to listen to me today, and that is the "organization of the church." Here is a most vital subject. Many think God did not give

and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." This, man cannot change. In Matthew 10:32 and Romans 10:9-10 we find that Christ and Paul command that we "confess Him before men" if we expect to be saved.

HIS PATTERN

Now we take the commands of Christ for salvation and they are these: You must "preach the gospel"; man must "believe this gospel"; he must "repent of his sins," his penitent faith must make him not ashamed to "own his Master before men"; and this penitent believing soul has to be "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" or Spirit, which are the same (Matthew 28:18-20). All these are commanded of the Lord. When God commands, man is bound. Man cannot change God's "patterns." His pattern here is plain. I must believe in my Lord, repent of my sins and owning Christ as my Lord, I am baptized that I might be saved (Mark 16:16). This is "unalterable." It cannot be changed.

EXAMPLES

The first example ever given of the Great Commission in action was in Jerusalem where Peter preached on the day of Pentecost to the multitude assembled (Acts, chapter 2). Here he preached unto them the gospel of a crucified Christ, of a RISEN Christ, of an exalted Christ sitting on David's throne in heaven. He commanded them to "know assuredly," that is to "believe confidently," that God had made Jesus BOTH Lord and Christ; this faith caused them to ask, "What shall we do?" Peter said to those who "believed his preaching," "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Those who "gladly received the word were baptized," verse 41. Here you have the Lord's "pattern" for salvation demonstrated by an example. Now there is not example or examples in all your New Testament which differ from this of the Great Commission and Acts 2. The reason for it is God's "patterns are unalterable." In every example from Pentecost on, conversion always began with the preaching of the gospel and ended by men "believing this gospel" and being "baptized" and after this they were "members of the church" and acknowledged by the Lord as "saved." There is NO EXCEPTION.

Now the Lord did not send his Spirit to guide the apostles in a half dozen different "ways" or "methods" of being saved, all differing the one from the other, and then say to them THIS IS THE PATTERN! God's "bound patterns" do not differ like that. When he lays down a "binding pattern" for all to follow, he gives it in "one set" of "blue-prints" and not a half dozen. Mere men have caused confusion in the world with respect to "how men are saved." They say God did not give a "bound pattern" and so we may be saved by "any method" just so man is honest. Now had the Lord said "just so you are sincere in what you do I will save you," then that would have been the "pattern," but he did not say that. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and you can't change it. When God lays down a set order and commands us to do that, man can't change it to suit his own ideas. God's patterns are "unalterable." Failure to

recognize these great truths discussed today, is where the world has made its mistakes. They have sought to change God's "patterns" concerning the "organization of the church" and the "plan by which man is saved." They cannot rightfully be changed any more than could the patterns for the "ark, or the tabernacle."

May God bless you and keep you, and may you come believing in God, repenting of your sins, confessing your Master, and be baptized for the remission of your sins that you may be saved by God's unalterable pattern of salvation is my prayer in the Master's name.

GOD HAD A LAW

By E. R. HARPER

Radio Sermon No. 196

October 30, 1955

A few years ago I was in a Bible discussion with a man who said to me, "Harper, man is not saved by law: he is saved by grace and therefore what man does has nothing to do with his salvation." His idea was, if man had to do something to be saved, it is "by law" and not of "grace"; it is by "works" and not by "faith." Now this good man had the wrong conception of both "law" and "works." He did not understand how the "grace of God" saved man, neither did he understand how "salvation by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8, 9) was bestowed upon man. No man can be saved by "law" or "works" apart from the "grace of God." Just so, no man is saved by "grace" or through "faith" apart from "obedience unto God." The "grace" of God only bestows upon man the blessings of God, "through faith," when that "faith obeys the commands of God." What we must learn is, when God gives a law, or a command it must be obeyed. Just because man has to obey God, does not mean it is not by "grace through faith." The grace of God has provided the remedy which man could not, and the "faith" on man's part appropriates the blessings provided by "grace," by obeying the Saviour's orders. It has always been so in every age of God's dealings with man. Man must obey God!

MOSES PRAYS

This lesson is very forcibly brought out in God's dealings with Moses, Aaron, and their sister, Miriam, in Numbers 12. Here Aaron and Miriam had complained against God. They became jealous of Moses and thus the criticism of God. We must remember it is God who must be pleased, not man.

GOD CALLS THEM

God, knowing of their criticism of him, called them before him and said to Aaron and Miriam, "Hear now my words; if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth . . ." Now the "anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed." As a result of this sin on the part of Aaron and Miriam, she became "leprous," which is a type of sin. When Aaron saw what had happened, he realized this was because of their arrogance

against God's laws. He then began to beg Moses not to lay this sin upon them. Aaron acknowledged they had done "foolishly" in criticizing God's laws. Aaron begged Moses not to let their sister be "as one dead." Now watch Moses, because of the fleshly ties that bound them he began to beg God to set aside his "law" and heal his sister. "Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, HEAL HER NOW, O GOD, I BESEECH THEE." Do what, Moses? "HEAL HER NOW, O GOD."

WHAT WAS THE ANSWER?

How many of you know God's answer to Moses? He said to Moses, "Let her be SHUT OUT FROM THE CAMP SEVEN DAYS and AFTER THAT let her be received in again." And Miriam was "SHUT OUT FROM THE CAMP SEVEN DAYS." You ask, what does this have to do with your subject today? Just this, "GOD HAD A LAW" regulating the action toward those who were "leprous" and he refused to set aside his law even for Moses, who the Bible said in Numbers 12:3 was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Yes, he refused to heal Miriam, the sister of Moses, contrary to the law he had given to them by Moses himself. God had a law to Israel regarding the leper! It is recorded in Leviticus, chapters 13, 14, and 15. If God would not set aside his law for Moses and heal his sister contrary to that law, think you God will set aside his law for us and in some special way "save us" contrary to his law today. The healing of Miriam was an act of God's grace, his unmerited favor, but it was not "without obedience to God's divine law." Obedience to God's law does not mitigate against God's grace; it is but the avenue through which this grace is bestowed upon man. As we pass from this example of how God's grace operated through divine law, I call your attention again to the prayer of Moses, "Heal her NOW, O GOD." God did not set aside his "law" for Moses. Moses knew God's law, but because of "sentimental reasons" for Miriam, his sister, he sought to get God to be a "respector of persons" in his case. But GOD HAD A LAW and Moses' sister had to abide by it. Just so with us and our people. God has "given us a law" by which to be saved by his grace, as I shall show in this lesson today.

NAAMAN

In II Kings, chapter five is the story of Naaman, the leper. He was "captain of the host of the king of Syria," verse 1. "Syria had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife," verse 2. This little girl said unto her mistress, "Would God my lord (Naaman) were with the PROPHET THAT is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Naaman made this known to the king and the king of Syria, instead of sending him to the "prophet of God," as the maid had said, sent him to the "king of Israel" with gold and silver, and a "letter of introduction from the king of Syria."

DELIVERS LETTER TO KING

The letter is delivered by Naaman to the "king of Israel." The king reads it and says, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto ME to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore

consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." He "rent his clothes." Too many today are misunderstanding God's instructions and going to the wrong source for their information. You must come to your Bible. IT and IT ONLY is the revealed will of God to man (I Peter 4:11, II Timothy 3:16, 17; Jude 3). As Jude here declares, there will never be any more revelations given to man. We may be like Naaman, and his king if we wish, and go to other sources for our instructions, but you will finally have to come back to this revelation of the "prophet of God," Christ Jesus our Lord. He is THE prophet through whom God has spoken to us today (Deuteronomy 18:18-20; Matthew 18:18-20; Hebrews 1:1, 2). No more can we turn from his revelation today than could Naaman turn from God's prophet back there.

GOD'S PROPHET SPEAKS

Elisha, the prophet of God, sent to the king of Israel and said to him, "Let him (Naaman) come now to me, and he shall KNOW that there is a prophet in Israel." "Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." But the prophet did not so much as go out to meet Naaman but sent HIS servant to tell him what to do. He said, "Go and wash in Jordan SEVEN TIMES and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This enraged Naaman, much like baptism does today. The Bible said he "was wroth." God's command had made him angry. Why? It was not like HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE. Hear him as he said, "I THOUGHT, he will surely come out to me, AND STAND, AND call on the name of the Lord his God, and STRIKE his hand over the place, and recover the leper." He had it all figured out. When "God's law" did not meet with his approval he turned away. Could it be this takes place today when "God's plan of salvation" does not suit our way of thinking? My friends, here, as in Numbers 12, GOD HAD A LAW. God said, "Go wash seven times in Jordan." As he started back home to die of his leprosy, mad at God's prophet, he said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." He thought the "water" would cleanse him. Not so. It was God's grace BUT it would not heal him until Naaman's faith obeyed "God's law" given to him for the cure. Friends, he KNEW what God had commanded him. He could not misunderstand. It was "God's law," not "Naaman's" that must be respected. "GOD HAS A LAW"!

HIS SERVANT SPEAKS

Now Naaman's servant said, "My father if the prophet had bid thee do some GREAT THING, wouldst thou not have done it?" He knew his master. How much we today are like that. The servant did not give him time to answer, he said, "How much rather then, when he saith to thee, WASH AND BE CLEAN?" Naaman came to his senses. He had come there a leper. No power of his own could cure him. He was returning a leper to die. He had God's remedy and was mad at the prophet of God for giving it to him! All because it was not like HE thought it should be. He saw how foolish he was in not be-

believing what God had told him. So he went to Jordan and washed. May I ask you this question, Why did he go and wash? It was because he suddenly trusted the words of the prophet of God. Was he healed the moment he TRUSTED GOD'S PROMISES, THAT HE WOULD CURE HIM? If God's grace always blesses without law or commands, (then since leprosy is a type of sin; and this cure, is a type of our salvation,) he should have been cured the moment his faith TRUSTED the promise of God to heal him. This man washed once, twice, six times, and yet he was a leper. May I ask you, Why this? Here is a faith obeying; a faith trusting; and yet he is not cured. Just one answer, "GOD HAD A LAW." That law said, "Wash seven times," and not until that law is obeyed will the "grace of God" heal his leprosy. This no man can deny. He dips the "seventh time" and his "flesh became as that of a child," verse 14.

QUESTION

May I ask you this question, Did Naaman trust in the "water" to heal him? My friends, listen to his own words, "Now I KNOW that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." He did not turn to the "water" and praise the water. He knew where the power was, BUT he knew WHY that power had healed him. He had surrendered his will to the will of God; and to the LAW of God, and in that "complete surrender," God's grace had healed him. He looked THROUGH the WATER to God for the healing BUT the healing came AFTER he obeyed God to "wash seven times in Jordan." GOD HAD A LAW. He would not cleanse Naaman until he obeyed that law. God's grace works through his laws, his commands. Friends read I John 2:3-5. Here John says, "He that saith, I know him and keepeth NOT HIS COMMANDMENTS is a LIAR and the truth is not in him."

PREACHER MEETS HIM

Suppose on his way to Jordan he had met a man who told him that all he had to do was just "believe," "trust God" for the cure. If you have to "wash in Jordan" you will be trusting the "water"; it will not be by the "grace of God." You will be trusting your "own works to cure you." Suppose he had said to Naaman, you are to "wash because you are already healed"; just to show the world you are "already cured." Suppose Naaman had said, "Well, I will obey you, instead of God," and then like Moses, he had begun to pray, "Cleanse me right now, O God"; I believe you; I trust you; I do not wish to give praise to the water and now when you "cure me Lord" then I will arise and do what you have told me, NOT to be healed as you said, but "because" I am "already healed," as this man told me!

Friends, what do you think would have happened to him? You know he would not have been healed. "God had a law" and that law commanded Naaman to "wash seven times IN Jordan and thou shalt be clean." He did not trust in the "water" nor in his "own works." He trusted in God to "cleanse him" AFTER he had obeyed God's law. This is unanswerable and it is a "type of our salvation from sin" as we shall see later on.

BLIND MAN

In John the 9th chapter is the story of the man "born blind." Christ "anointed his eyes with clay" (verse 6) and told him to "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The record says, "He went his way therefore, and WASHED, and came SEEING." Now the enemies of Christ sought to discredit this miracle, just as they do today. They called Christ a sinner. The blind man said, "Whether he be a sinner or not, I know not; ONE THING I DO KNOW, that, whereas I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE." Ladies and gentlemen, here is another plain, easily to be understood principle, with reference to God's dealings with man: "Whereas I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE." What was "God's law" here? Just this, "Go WASH IN THE POOL OF SILOAM" AND SEE. Just that simple. The man went, washed, and received his sight. Why? "GOD HAD A LAW." Here, was the grace of God, bestowed. Yet it was bestowed upon the condition that he "obey GOD'S LAW." Again the grace of God operated THROUGH GOD'S LAW. What made him go to the pool and wash? Faith; trust; reliance upon God. If man is blessed by "faith alone" or "by grace through faith," without having to obey God's commands or God's law, then WHY was this man not so blessed? Blindness is a type of our being lost (Acts 26:18); hence the receiving of his sight would be a type of our receiving our salvation. But between his "blindness" and his "sight" there was "water." Question, Did the "water heal him"? Did he "trust in the water"? Now my good friends, just as Naaman and this blind man could "look through the waters" in Jordan and the pool of Siloam to God's grace, for their blessing and it not be by "their works"; not by "trusting in the water" for their blessings, just so man, under our New Testament, may look "through the waters of baptism" unto God's grace to save him. If not why not?

THE SINNER

As I close this lesson, I am coming now to our New Testament. In it God also has a law. In Romans 3:27, this law is called the "law of faith." Now it is THROUGH THIS law that "God's grace through faith," is going to bless us with salvation. Just as his laws with Moses, Naaman, and the Blind Man were mediums through which his blessings of grace were bestowed, just so it is with this "law of faith"! O yes, the cure of Miriam; the healing of Naaman; and the opening of the eyes of the blind man, were acts of God's merciful grace, because each of these was beyond the power of man to accomplish and THAT is what makes a thing by "the grace of God."

THE SINNER

Now we come to the sinner and his salvation. It is "by the grace of God through faith" just as were all these, but God's grace here operates "through his law" just as it did back there. I am now ready to ask, What is God's law with respect to man's salvation from sin? Does he have a law and if so where? In Mark 16:16, Christ said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and IS BAPTIZED, shall be saved. But he that believeth NOT shall be damned." What is God's "law of faith" here for sal-

vation? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here you have the sinner, out yonder you have his salvation. Now Christ placed between the "sinner" and his "salvation" the command of "baptism" just as he placed the "Jordan" and the "pool of Siloam" between Naaman, the Blind Man and their blessings. Here "God HAS a Law" to the sinner. It must be obeyed just as these others did. Again in Acts 2:38 Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized EVERY ONE OF YOU in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here God had a LAW. That law included "baptism for the remission of sins" to "every one of them." Again the "sinner" had to go "through baptism," to be saved. Who gave this law? God. On which side of baptism were "salvation and remission of sins"? On the same side that Naaman's "cleansing" and the Blind Man's "sight" were; it was AFTER the water and NOT before. Now were they "saved by grace THROUGH FAITH"? Certainly they were but again, "Grace through faith" operated by the "Law of faith" to bestow the blessing. Never is it by "grace alone" nor by "faith alone" (James 2:24); nor is it "by grace through faith" without obedience to God's law or his commands. Grace operates "through God's Law" (Romans 3:27). In the above examples "God had a law" and they had to obey it to be saved. The Ephesians, to whom it was said they were "saved by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8, 9), had been baptized long before Paul said this of them. Had they refused baptism in the name of the Lord (Acts 19:1-10), it would never have been said of them they were "saved by grace through faith" any more than would Naaman and the blind man have been healed without going through the waters of Jordan and the pool of Siloam. In all of these "GOD HAD A LAW" AND THROUGH THAT LAW HE BESTOWED HIS BLESSINGS.

Now suppose some man comes to this sinner and tells him, "The water can't save you"! If you have to be baptized you will be "trusting your own works to save you." You are "saved first" and then "baptized" just to show you are already saved by the grace of God! Suppose the sinner listens to him instead of the Lord and begins to beg the Lord like Moses did, to "save me now, O God"; then I will be baptized, not to be saved; not for the remission of my sins as YOU have said, but to "show to the world you have already saved me." Now my good people do you think God's grace would save him in this act any more than God would have "cleansed Naaman" or "opened the eyes of this blind man" had he fallen down by the water and like Moses, cried "Save me now, O God"? He, like Naaman, Miriam, and the Blind Man, had to obey God's law.

CONCLUSION

Yes friends, GOD HAS A LAW of salvation. In that law man must believe God (Hebrews 11:6); repent of his sins (Acts 17:31); and be baptized (Mark 16:16), acknowledging Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37). This is "GOD'S LAW." It must be obeyed. Will you not do it today and be blessed "by grace through faith" as were Naaman and the Blind Man in the centuries gone by? May God bless you is my prayer in my Saviour's name.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER, 1955

RECEIPTS

Paid on Pledges	\$15,185.55	
Contributions	6,190.78	
Transcriptions	175.00	
Total Receipts for September		\$21,551.33

EXPENDITURES

Broadcasting Expense:		
Tape Recording	764.34	
Radio Time	17,362.00	18,126.34
Wages		2,260.00
Office Expense:		
Insurance	10.00	
Postage	149.50	
Social Security	21.20	
Office Supplies	60.66	
Printing	262.30	
Utilities	26.02	
Tel. & Tel.	70.48	
Rent	150.00	
Miscellaneous	1.52	751.68
Total Expenditures		21,138.02
Receipts Exceed Expenditures by		\$ 413.21

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